

-4-

Roy McPaters says he has heard his uncle J. Martin tell how they went out once and killed a sheep belonging to a near by farmer. That they were so hungry that they ate it when only half cooked and then fought over the skin. At another time they broke into a cellar where a woman had her ox hid. They cut its throat and took the meat back to camp.

Ambrose Bierce tells of hunting bear on Cheat Mountain when the snow was up to his arms. Whether he hunted for pleasure or to obtain food I do not know. Also I've been told by Lee Ervin, who had several uncles from Bath Co. in Camp Baldwin, that the reason they were so well prepared to repulse this Federal army was because they could see them as they marched down Back Allegheny and knew they were coming for an attack. Therefore, had all in readiness.

June 19, 1940

Nelle Y. McLaughlin

Granita S. Dilley  
March 11, 1940

CHAPTER 4 - SECTION 4b-3

Page 1

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

BATTLES OF MILL POINT AND  
DROOP MOUNTAIN

In November 1863 there were no Confederate forces of any size anywhere in West Virginia except in the Greenbrier Valley. That was held by the Confederates from its head to its foot, some 170 miles, by between four and five thousand soldiers, protecting Virginia from attack from the west.

General Kelly, in command of the department of West Virginia, gave orders to General Averill at Beverly and General Duffie at Gauley Bridge to send armies to meet at Lewisburg and drive the Confederates out of the Greenbrier Valley.

Averill came into Pocahontas by the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike and turned south at Travelers Repose. At that time the Confederate troops were stationed as follows: At Glade Hill in the upper part of the county was Captain W. L. McNeel's Co., At Edray, Captain J. W. Marshall was in charge of a detachment watching the Marlins Bottom and Huttonsville Turnpike; Col. W. W. Arnett had a regiment at Marlins Bottom in comfortable log houses getting ready to winter there; Colonel W. L. Jackson had the main part of his regiment the 19th Virginia Cavalry at Mill Point; Col. W. P. Thompson was away with a part of his regiment on an expedition to Nicholas County and had gotten as far as Cold Knob in Greenbrier Co., Gen. Echols had the main part of the troops at Lewisburg.

McNeel's Co., at Glade Hill discovered the Advance of Averill and sent a messenger to warn Arnett at Marlins bottom of the advance. Averill moved swiftly, and but for this courier getting through would have surprised the Confederates in their camps. As it was the McNeel Soldiers got too close and four were captured, and John Adam McNeel had his horse shot and he got a broken leg out of it. The main camp of McNeel's Co. was cut off and they escaped by going up Galfords Creek and crossing the Allegheny Mountains to the waters of Back Creek.

June 19, 1940

Nelle I. ...  
Marlinton, " Va.

Battles of Mill Point - Pocahontas County

Page 2

Arnett got his men out of Marlins Bottom by the skin of his teeth as it was. He sent a horse soldier (cavalryman) to tell Captain Marshall at Edray that he was going to barricade the road on Price Hill, and for him to march the back way and come to the road on top of Price Hill. Arnett cut a lot of trees across the Price Hill road and dug some of the road away on that sliding hillside. The exciting days for this county were Wednesday, Nov. 4, Thursday Nov. 5th; and Friday Nov. 6, 1863. Then it was that the biggest battle ever fought in Pocahontas occurred. Arnett left Marlins Bottom at sun down on Wednesday and Col. Ohley moved into his deserted log cabins at dusk.

There was only one road between Marlins Bottom and Mill Point, and Averill with his army at Huntersville had laid a plan to capture Arnett's forces by sending Ohley down the pike to get Arnett started south while Col. Harris moved his forces down Beaver Creek to get ahead of him and block the road at Marvin Chapel where the two roads unite. This plan would have succeeded but for Col. W. P. Thompson who had been recalled from Cold Knob with his cavalry and was unsaddling at his old camp on the John S. Kellison farm when Jackson's courier rode up and told him to hold the Beaver Creek road. Thompson immediately went to Beaver Creek, and spent the evening cutting trees across the road. He fell back firing as he went. This delayed the Federal Army to such an extent that Arnett got by.

On this expedition, Averill had with him some signal experts. It was arranged that the main corps would stay at Huntersville, while others went on to Marvin Chapel where they were to send up rockets to communicate the position and success of Col. Harris and his troops.

Herritt went to the top of the hill at Huntersville to observe the signals and Derricks went on with troops to report. It was arranged that the rockets were to be sent up at 8 P. M. and Herritt waited on top of the knob until 10 P. M. and seeing no rockets he went back to headquarters. It afterwards appeared that Derricks was not able to send up his rockets until 11 P. M. and they were not observed at Huntersville though the Confederates saw them red against the sky. They

June 19, 1940

Nelle Y. McLaughlin  
Marlinton, W. Va.

Battles of Mill Point - Pocahontas County

Page 3

were a sort of a new departure in mountain warfare. Thompson and his blockading tactics had interfered with the march so much that the army was three hours late.

Thursday Nov. 5, 1863, was Mill Point day. Mill Point has never been given the credit for the baptism by fire that she had that day because what occurred next day at Droop Mountain, five miles south, has overshadowed it to such a great extent.

There was enough powder burned that day at Mill Point to fight a great battle. The Federal armies were at Stephen Hale Run and on the hill between that run and Mill Point. The Confederates formed a battle line along the banks of Stamping Creek for a mile or more, and their artillery was on the hill just south of Mill Point. When their guns began to thunder it occurred to Jackson that his battle line was just the right distance from the Federal batteries to be in range of grape shot and he withdrew his army by having them slip silently up the stream until they were hid by the bend of the mountain, and he took them out by the flint pits near Tom Beards. Having gotten his troops under way, he looked up to the long smooth summit of Droop Mountain and decided to take his stand there. By nightfall he was in camp on the crest looking down on the Federal army as they kindled their fires in the broad fields of the Little Levels.

On that Thursday the Federal troops at Marlins Bottom got word to cut out the blockade and move on to Mill Point. Before they left, they burned the log cabins the Confederates had planned to winter in.

On that Thursday, too, General Echols at Lewisburg heard that Gen. Duffie with an army was covering him from Gauley Bridge, and Averill was coming from Beverly, so he got busy. He sent a regiment west on the Midland Trail to hold Duffie. He moved the remainder of his army to Pocahontas. That day he marched his men fourteen miles and went into camp at Spring Creek. The arrangements were to reinforce Jackson who was to fall back until Echols could join him. That night, message was received by Echols that the Federal army was much larger than they had thought at first, and that there would be a battle next day on top of Droop Mountain.

This was no night to sleep. Echols got his forces under way at two o'clock and reached Droop Mountain at nine o'clock that same morning. This was a record march.